

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)



The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's single largest environmental improvement program and has proven to be one of the most effective. The program allows landowners and operators to enter into 10- to 15-year contracts with USDA to convert highly erodible cropland and other environmentally sensitive cropland to vegetative cover such as introduced and native grasses, wildlife habitat and food-plot plantings, trees, filter strips, or riparian buffers. In exchange, landowners receive annual rental payments for the land and cost-share assistance for establishing certain conservation practices.

CRP continues to be a popular conservation program in Colorado and in other Northern Plains states.

CRP Goals

- ✓ To reduce erosion
- ✓ To improve water quality
- ✓ To enhance wildlife habitat

National Totals (as of October 2004)

- ✓ 34.8 million acres enrolled
- ✓ 680,326 contracts
- ✓ \$1,678,686,195 payments to producers

Colorado Totals (as of October 2002)

- ✓ 2.27 million acres of cropland enrolled
- ✓ 39 out of 63 counties participating
- ✓ \$71K total in rental payments to Colorado producers
- ✓ \$30 per acre average rental payment
- ✓ 12,532 plans written with individual landowners

CRP's continuous sign-up allows the landowner to establish certain conservation buffer practices on cropland and marginal pasture and to enroll the land in CRP at any time without having to go through the process of submitting a competitive offer. Competitive offers are required during regular CRP sign-ups.

Conservation buffers help to control potential pollutants and manage other environmental concerns.

- ✓ Filter strips
- ✓ Field borders
- ✓ Grassed waterways
- ✓ Field windbreaks
- ✓ Shelterbelts
- ✓ Contour grass strips
- ✓ Riparian (streamside) buffers

